

# Amazing Career of a Modern Monte Cristo

Count Savin, Now on His Way to Siberia, Spent Fortunes of a Croesus and Aspired to a Throne—He Plotted Against the Czar

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

ST. PETERSBURG, Dec. 1.—We are now hearing the last of a nobleman, at present on his way to spend the rest of his years in Siberia, whose career surpasses anything in fiction, or history for adventure, monumental money-getting in devious ways and equally monumental money-spending on luxuries fit for a Croesus. Owing to the fact that the United States was the scene of part of his story the cable dispatches have given details of his final capture, but the whole astonishing narrative, spreading as it does, all over Europe, has never been told in complete form before. As the result of much delving among the records, it is now unfolded chapter by chapter.

Count Nicholas Savin, son of one of the most ancient families of Russian nobility, was born in 1858 as the youngest son of the head of the house at that time. His upbringing was that of the ordinary Russian aristocrat of the old school, and at the age of twenty he entered the smartest regiment of cavalry guards with the rank of cornet, the lowest grade of officers in the Russian army.

Early in life, Count Savin had remarkable experiences, for his three elder brothers died one after the other, in a short time, making him sole heir to the vast family estates. His father died soon afterward, and he entered into possession of his patrimony at the age of twenty-two. At that time his property was estimated to consist of 100,000 acres of land, while his invested capital was figured at about \$5,000,000.

Feeling secure in the possession of all these riches, Count Nicholas Savin began a life of the most reckless sort. He kept race horses and he gambled on the race courses of Russia as though his only object in life was to throw his money away as quickly as possible. He played cards with equal recklessness and when he took part in a game the points were never less than \$5 each. His mode of life in general was luxurious to excess. He gave dinners costing \$5,000 each and in a Russian midwinter had fresh flowers brought from the south of France to give to each of his guests a bouquet valued at \$5. The same extravagance was prac-



COUNTRESS DE LAUTREC.  
Whom Count Savin Married and Whose Fortune He Squandered.

ticed in all directions, with the result that the count's immense fortune soon began to decrease with alarming rapidity.

## THE CRASH CAME.

Within three years from the date of his succession to the family estates the crash came and almost before he had any idea that he was in pecuniary difficulties the count found himself a ruined man. The estates had to be sold to cover the endless list of debts which he had contracted in all directions. In many cases the count had been ruthlessly plundered by tradesmen and other creditors, who took advantage of his childlike ignorance of money matters, but they had only hastened the catastrophe which Count Savin's spendthrift habits would inevitably have caused sooner or later. When accounts came to be balanced up Count Savin found that there were insufficient funds left to pay his debts of honor, so that he was quickly branded as an outcast by his former comrades of the regiment of cavalry guards. Count Savin threw up his commission in the army, went abroad and drifted to Paris, the mecca of all Russian travelers.

In Paris began that career which raised Count Savin to an unenviable notoriety. He soon got into touch with card-playing circles, and in the great, gay city he acquired a practical knowledge of money-making and other necessary accessories to a luxurious life without private means. His marvelous linguistic talents were of great service to him, for he could converse fluently in English, French, German, Italian and half a dozen Slavic tongues, including Polish and Czechish, besides his native Russian. His title secured for him the entrance of the most exclusive circles of Parisian society, for the story of his misfortunes in Russia had not then reached the French capital, while his personal manners, which were as distinguished as they were amiable and fascinating, made him a favorite in the fashionable salons of Paris.

## WON FROM FUTURE KING.

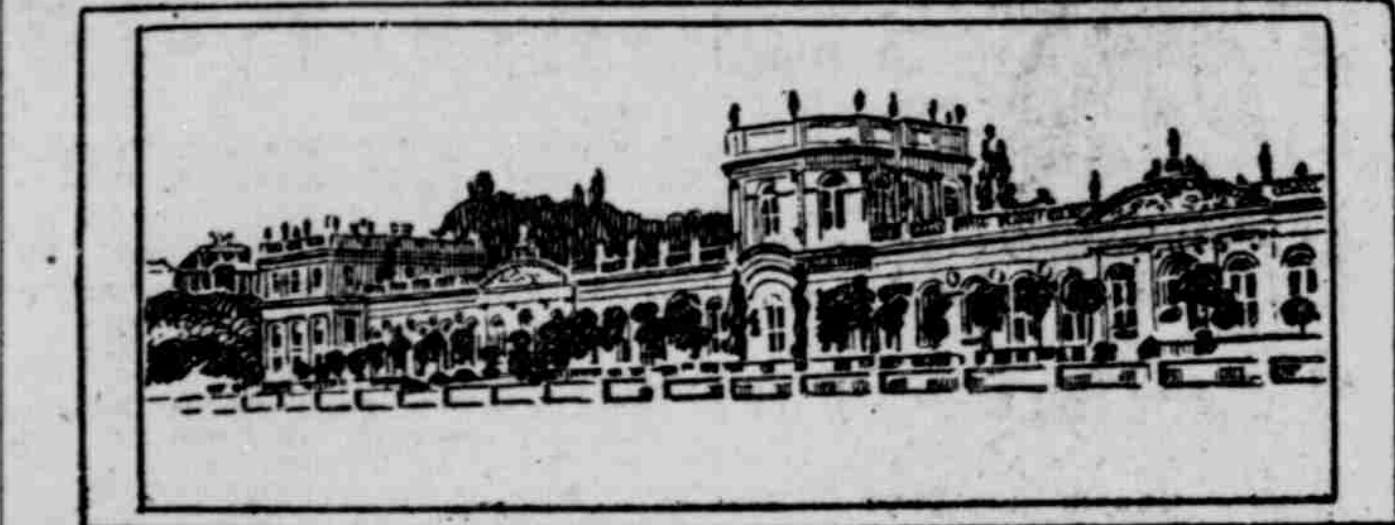
Not long after he had settled in Paris Count Savin rented a magnificent apartment on the Boulevard des Capucines and began housekeeping on a princely scale of credit. One firm furnished the apartment at a cost of \$20,000 without receiving a cent in cash; another business house supplied the count with quantities of wine; a third catered for choicest provisions, and so forth in all branches of life. The hard cash required to pay for the immediate necessities of existence was easily earned at card playing, and by means of loans obtained from aristocratic friends.

Count Savin was an expert in the art of getting money from women in society. He first fascinated them, made love to them, made a conquest of them or compromised them in some way or other, and then drew on them for funds, which were given either for love of him or to escape the exposure with which he guardedly threatened them if other means failed. Men, too, lent him money freely, for he had a wonderful knack of inspiring them with the utmost confidence in his power to repay loans of any magnitude. French noblemen, wealthy manufacturers, financiers, politicians, actors and writers all fell into the trap, and supplied money which they never saw again.

But Count Savin's victims were not limited to French circles. On several occasions he joined the circles of the favored few who associated with the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII of England, during that royal personage's visits to Paris, and each time the Russian succeeded in winning considerable sums of money from the heir to the English throne. The last time he met the Prince of Wales he asked him

pointblank for a loan of \$1,000. Edward could not resist the appeal and gave him the amount in bank notes there and then. It is related that no less than a score of royalties who came to Paris at this period were all fleeced by the audacious count in one way or another, and it is estimated by the police that the amount thus extracted from imperial and royal purses was fully \$30,000.

**FUN WITH GOVERNMENTS.**  
Count Savin did not confine his operations to these limits. He offered his services to the Russian government as a spy, promising that through his connections with high society he would be able to supply the Russian Ministry of War with valuable secret information on French military subjects.



ONE OF THE CHIEF ANCESTRAL MANSIONS, NEAR GRODNO, RUSSIA, OF THE SAVIN FAMILY.

The Russian ambassador in Paris was favorably impressed, and, knowing by personal experience that the count actually moved in the most exclusive circles, a general commission of espionage was entrusted to him. Soon he began to send the Russian government reports on military matters of a startling and sensational character. These reports were brilliantly written and contained so much that Russian military experts knew to be accurate, and were drawn up with such command of the technicalities of the subject that they were regarded as genuine, and the count was liberally remunerated for them. The information was duly treasured up in the archives of the Russian Ministry of War, and it was not until several years later that the Russian government ascertained by chance that Count Savin's highly appreciated reports were nothing but the inventions of his own vivid imagination.

Simultaneously with his espionage for the Russian government Count Savin offered his services, which were accepted, to Germany, to Austria and to Spain. To all three countries he supplied military reports of a nature deeply interesting to their respective military leaders, and in each case he sent them his own inventions, though, as in the case of Russia, this was not discovered till some time afterward.

## PLOT AGAINST THE CZAR.

At the same time that he was in the pay of four European governments this extraordinary man was a member of a Russian Nihilist association, the headquarters of which were in Paris, and he possessed the full confidence of the political conspirators, who had not the slightest idea of his official connections. As a matter of fact, Count Savin appears to have been more sincere in his Nihilism than in any other respect, and so far as has been ascertained he never played his revolutionary friends false. On the contrary, he was a warm adherent of the cause, and a plot to assassinate the Czar Alexander III in 1888 was clearly traced to the Parisian group of desperadoes of whom Savin was the most prominent.

Thanks to the high social position which he occupied in Paris, and to his reputation for the possession of boundless wealth, an ambitious matrimonial match was the easiest thing in the world for Count Savin to manipulate. His choice fell on a young woman who was as beautiful as she was rich, the Countess de Lautrec, one of the daughters of Count Lautrec, then a well-known French nobleman. The countess received a dowry of half a million dollars, and her parents and friends considered that she was exceptionally lucky in securing such a husband as the dashing Count Savin. According to the custom of the country, the husband took possession of the wife's dowry and it was the way of all money that came into Count Savin's hands. Subsequently, after two or three years of matrimony, the countess obtained a divorce.

Finally there came a time when Paris began to be an uncomfortable place of residence for the count. Stories were whispered about. To avoid open exposure, the subject of them proceeded to Berlin, where he repeated what he had done in Paris. When he had obtained all the money he could in Berlin, Count Savin went to Vienna, and from Vienna to Rome, and from Rome to Madrid, and from Madrid to Copenhagen.

## SCHEMED TO BE A MONARCH.

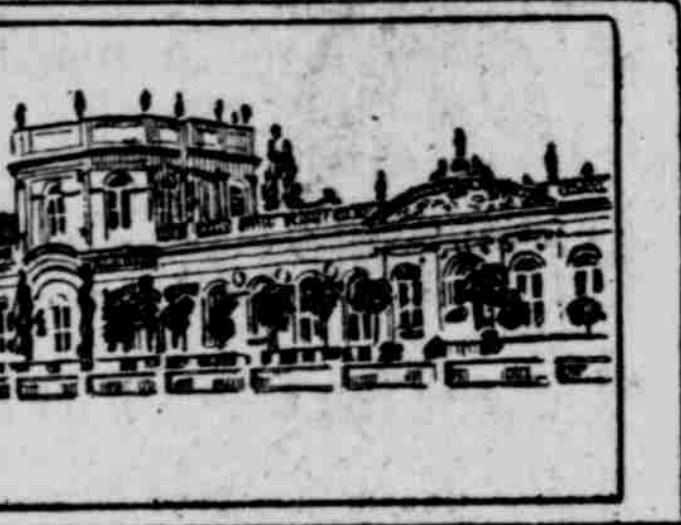
Toward the end of 1892, when he was thirty-four years of age, Count Savin assumed the name of Count Lautrec de Toulouse and went to the Balkans to seek new adventures in the troubled zone of the near East. At that time there was grave discontent in Bulgaria. Prince Ferdinand had failed to realize the expectations centered on him at his election and the count arriving in the Balkans when this discontent was at fever heat, conceived the idea of ousting Prince Ferdinand and becoming his successor as Bulgaria's ruler. Count Savin began to plot and plan for this end with all the skill and cunning which he had acquired in his countless intrigues of all kinds throughout Europe. His transactions with several European governments had put into his hands letters from numerous noted personages of the highest importance in international affairs, and now he made use of these communications to prove to prominent Bulgarians, whose support he needed, that he possessed the entire confidence of the principal statesmen of Europe, and that consequently he would be a thoroughly suitable candidate for the Bulgarian throne. It says much for Count Savin's diplomatic genius that he was able to deceive even Stambouloff, the greatest statesman whom the Balkan countries have produced.

Stambouloff fully believed that Count Savin stood high in the favor of the Russian government and that his elevation to the Bulgarian throne would be welcomed by the Czar and his ministers. Stambouloff also was deluded into the belief that Count Savin possessed a claim on Austria, which would assure him of the Emperor Francis Joseph's valuable support in supplanting Prince Ferdinand. How Count Savin contrived to fool the wily Stambouloff has remained unknown, but the fact remains that the great Bulgarian statesman favored his pretensions to the throne and was supporting them when an event happened that put an effective stop to all further plans in that direction.

Count Savin had gone to Constantinople to secure the Sultan's assent to his attempt on the Bulgarian throne. While in Constantinople he was recognized by a member of the Russian secret service as a man with whom the Russian government had many accounts to settle. He had organized

a plot against the Czar, he had sold sham military secrets to Russia for large sums, he had misled the Russian ambassador in Paris with false political information, and, what was equally damning against him, he had received compromising letters from two or three grand duchesses of the Russian imperial family in Paris.

The Russian detective reported his discovery to the Russian embassy and it was decided without further ado to kidnap Count Savin and convey him back to Russia to answer for his crimes against that country. It was a highly illegal proceeding and a grave violation of international rights, but, after all, Constantinople hardly belongs to the civilized world, and Russian influence is predominant there.



COUNT NICHOLAS SAVIN.

Under cover of darkness, when Count Savin was strolling from a café back to his hotel, he was seized, gagged, thrown into a closed cab, driven to the seashore and conveyed on board a Russian steamship anchored in the Bosphorus. His disappearance was mysterious and complete and Stambouloff never ascertained what had become of his favorite pretender to the Bulgarian throne.

## BECAME A CONVICT.

Count Savin's trial took place in Moscow in 1893 and was conducted with closed doors, for the Russian government had every reason to keep secret all the disclosures made there. Count Savin bore himself bravely



COUNT NICHOLAS SAVIN.  
From What is Believed to Be the Only Photograph of Him in Existence.

and defended himself with skill, but his condemnation was a foregone conclusion and he was sentenced to lifelong banishment to Siberia, coupled with ten years' hard labor in the Siberian mines. A few weeks later Count Savin was a nameless convict in a Siberian penal settlement, doing ten hours of the coarsest labor every day, and surrounded by murderers and other criminals. It must have been a terrible ordeal for the successful political plotter who had lived a life of luxury in Paris and shone in the gay salons of Parisian society, that it did not last long.

With the wonderful resource and inventiveness which characterized him Count Savin contrived to escape, assumed a disguise and made his way to Tomsk, the principal town of Siberia. With colossal impudence he set up business there as a corn dealer and perpetrated a series of extraordinary swindles in connection with big sales of grain. Chance led to his detection, he was rearrested and taken back to the penal settlement, where fearful retribution awaited him. He was brought in front of the assembled convicts, stripped, tied to an iron frame and flogged with knouts. The count was unconscious when it was over and he had to be carried back to his miserable quarters, where he was left to recover from his injuries as best he could.

Somehow he got well again, and recommenced planning attempts to escape. In the end, after hardships, dangers and adventures, the recital of which would fill several volumes, Count Savin succeeded in getting out of Siberia into China, where he made his way to Shanghai, and thence to Japan and San Francisco. He arrived in the United States shortly before the war with Spain, and, ever in search of new and thrilling experiences, he shipped to Cuba and fought as a volunteer on the American side under an assumed name.

## HIS CAREER IN AMERICA.

Throughout the war Count Savin fought with distinction, but he fought for the pleasure of fighting, and not from any sympathy for the American cause, for, as a matter of fact, his aristocratic tastes led him to be a partisan of decadent Spain.

The period that followed was one of the most trying in Count Savin's life. He was utterly destitute, and he followed all sorts of occupations to keep his mouth above water. He drifted to Chicago and worked in turn as a waiter, billiard marker, cabman and street-car conductor. In these capacities he earned wages varying from \$4 to \$5 a week, but soon he worked his way up into the office of an export house in New York, where his knowledge of languages made him a useful member of the staff. In due course he was dispatched to Europe to act as agent to the firm, a post which he filled with astonishing success, converting his lack of commercial training and instincts.

From the moment of his escape from Siberia a cruel, relentless, irresistible enemy was tracking his footsteps. He was an escaped convict of political importance, and the Russian secret service received orders to trace him and recapture him. Year after year the search went on, and step by step the human bloodhounds of the Russian political police traced his course across China to Shanghai, from Shanghai to Japan, from Yokohama to San Francisco, from there to Cuba, from Cuba back to the States, to Chicago and other cities, winding up with New York.

From New York the scent led his pursuers to Europe and finally they came up with the object of their chase as he was boarding a steamship at Lisbon to proceed to Hamburg. Count Savin's second escape from the Siberian penal settlement occurred in 1896, and the agents of the Russian secret service obtained their first sight of him this autumn, so that the pursuit had lasted seven years. On the ship at Hamburg the Russian detective persuaded the German police to

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effect Count Savin's arrest on several charges, and extradition proceedings were immediately begun by Russia. Count Savin protested, but in vain. He claimed to be an American subject, and when he found that this availed nothing, he wrote an appeal to the Kaiser to release him, but this, too, remained unheeded. When the necessary formalities were completed he was shipped to Kronstadt, and by this time he must be on his way back to the penal settlement in Siberia from which he succeeded in escaping twice, but where he will now be so closely watched that another opportunity of freedom will scarcely be offered him till death comes to release him.

BERGUIS VOLKHOVSKY.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Does the State of Tennessee allow widows of Confederate veterans pensions?—D. S. L. It does not.

What do the letters "F. O. B." mean?—Graphic. Free on board, cars or vessels, as the case may be.

Are township elections in Indiana, who were elected in 1900, eligible as candidates for same office in 1904?—F. S. Yes.

Are observers in the Weather Bureau appointed after civil service examinations? 2. What is the pay?—A. H. Yes. 2. At the beginning, \$840 a year.

What is the annual consumption in the United States of beer, wine and liquors?—F. A. The national census calculators estimate it at 1,322,000,000 gallons.

What is the largest island in the world, and what is its area?—V. M. Greenland, estimated at 512,000 square miles, or nearly twice the area of Texas.

In what States and Territories of the union is insanity a ground for divorce?—Subscriber.

In Corsica, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Idaho, Washington, North Dakota and Indian Territory, with varying conditions.

By what plurality did the Democrats carry the city of New York in the presidential election of 1900? 2. Also, by what plurality did the Republicans carry the State of New York in that year?—C. M. By 23,505. 2. By 143,806.

Is ringbone in horses curable? 2. Is it a very serious defect in a horse?—Disagree. Not often. 2. It may be, and again it may give no trouble, it depends on the individual case. It lessens a horse's market value in practically all cases.

What is meant by "The Lion of St. Mark"?—W. C. E. A bronze figure of a winged lion on a column in the Piazzetta at Venice. It was the device of the old republic. It was carried off by Napoleon near the end of the eighteenth century, but was restored in 1815.

Is there any building in this country of thirty-two stories?—Box 236. We think there is not. The claim is made for the Syndicate building, Park row, New York city, that it is the tallest building in the world. It has twenty-seven stories, and is 346 feet from curb to cornice.

Where is Island Number Ten, the scene of a battle early in the civil war?—Veteran's Son. In the Mississippi river. It was in that river about forty miles below Columbus, Ky., near the boundary of the latter State and Tennessee. As the old island gradually was washed away a new one formed on the opposite side of the river.

What per cent of the trunk lines use compound locomotives? 2. Have any changed back to simple engines after using compound, and why?—A. Substantially all the large and well-equipped lines use some of them, but in what numbers, as compared with single engines, we cannot state. 2. We think not, for the advantage claimed for the compound types—economy of fuel—has been well sustained in practice.

Why did the Boers turn over Dr. Jamieson and his companions to the British authorities at the collapse of the Jameson raid, instead of trying them themselves?—Consult. They deemed it wiser so to do, as less

Jas. M. Burns, B. McGettigan, A. M. McGuire

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likely to supply England with an excuse for further persecution of their republic. President Kruger was the powerful advocate of this course. He had opposition aplenty from less moderate Boers.

Please give a good inexpensive process for making zinc etching.—R. U. N. There is no inexpensive process that we are aware of. To make these etchings requires an expensive plant. You can best get the desired information by visiting an illustrating establishment.

What is meant by electrolysis, as applied to damage done to underground water pipes?—J. W. J. Destruction of the metal of the pipes caused by stray electrical currents. The latter come mostly from electric street railroads that don't have proper accommodation for the return currents from the motors of the cars to the source of power supply. Pipes are attacked chiefly at the joints, where they become soft and pitted, at times giving out altogether.

I can determine reference to encyclopaedias the dates of ratification by the different States of the Constitution of the United States, but I cannot find when it was adopted or passed by Congress. Will you give the date?—Student.

Congress neither adopted nor passed it, but promptly on receiving the report of the convention, handed it on to the several legislatures. "And this," to quote one commentator, "was all the approval the Constitution ever received from Congress."

In what year was St. Patrick born, and when did he die? Was he a native of Ireland?—C. I can determine reference to encyclopaedias the dates of ratification by the different States of the Constitution of the United States, but I cannot find when it was adopted or passed by Congress. Will you give the date?—Student.

None of these questions can be answered positively. St. Patrick lived, but as to all other facts about him writers disagree. He left an autobiography, but the work was meant to exalt his cause, not himself, as its details of his life are scant. His birth is put at about 373, his death at 462, and Banaveta Tighernach, his birthplace, has been identified by many with Dumbarton, Scotland.

What is the record height for a balloon ascension?—F. A. R. For a balloon carrying aeronauts, that of Suring and Berson, July 31, 1901, made at Berlin. A height of 25,000 feet was measured, and additional height of 1,000 feet was claimed. This was exceeded greatly by a balloon sent up from Paris March 21, 1895, without passengers, but with self-registering instruments. The latter indicated an ascension of 49,300 feet, followed by freeing of their ink, later thawing of it and the recording of a height of 52,600 feet. The reliability of the figures of this ascent has been questioned seriously.

Highest Mountain. To the Editor of the Indianapolis Journal: In last Sunday's Journal a question, "Is there any truth in the report that a mountain has been discovered on the island of Papua, one of the East Indies, higher than Mount Everest," was answered in the negative. Please allow me to make a correction in this answer. Among the high mountains of the world there is no Mount Everest. In the Himalaya range of mountains, in India, bordering upon Tibet, Mount Everest is situated, and was long considered the highest mountain in the world. It is so given in the early geographies, but in the year 1887, when an expedition ascertained that this was not correct, in Papua, or New Guinea, in the eastern archipelago alluded to in the question, is Mount Hercules, which is nearly three-quarters of a mile higher than Mount Everest. The exact figures are: Mount Everest, 29,002 feet; Mount Hercules, 29,795 feet. J. T. E. Anderson, Ind., Dec. 7.

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